



Mark West District Virtual Music Class Information Grades 4-8

Dear Parent(s) of Prospective Music Students,

For the 2020-2021 academic year, the Mark West District instrumental and choral music program will be available in an online learning format to all interested students in grades 4 through 8. Naturally, there will be significant changes to the program this year due to the pandemic, and these changes will be explained in this information packet.

Ultimately, my goal for the music program this year is to provide students with an opportunity to unplug from electronic devices and create music by singing or playing an instrument. Although it seems contradictory to design an online class expressly to get students offline, that's exactly what I want to do.

In the past few days, weeks, and months, I have spent more time than I'd like to admit in front of a screen--for work, entertainment, shopping, and staying in touch with family and friends. But often, the most joy I felt during a day was when I forced myself away from the computer and instead sat down at my piano and played. I hope to share this joy of creating music with your children.

Warmly,

Mrs. Kara Kaufman

kkaufman@mwusd.org



Available Virtual Music Classes

Beginning Guitar: For students with absolutely no experience playing guitar.

Continuing Guitar: For students with at least one year of experience learning the guitar. They should be familiar with the strings, frets, reading TAB (tablature), and how to hold the guitar. (These elements will be reviewed, so it's okay if any are a bit hazy.)

Beginning Violin: For students with absolutely no experience playing violin.

*Note: the violin is a challenging instrument when first starting out, even when classes are in person. Distance learning will certainly make it even more challenging. Students wishing to learn violin should be prepared for a challenge. Cello is not being offered to beginners this year.

Continuing Violin/Viola/Cello: For students with at least one year of experience learning the violin, viola, or cello. They should be familiar with the notes on the D and A strings and how to hold the violin and bow. (These elements will be reviewed, so it's okay if any are a bit hazy.)

Continuing Band (Clarinet, Flute, or Trumpet): For students with at least one year of experience learning their chosen instrument AND who already own or can rent their instrument and acquire all necessary accessories (reeds, valve oil, etc.). They should be familiar with how to hold the instrument, produce a sound, and play 5-6 notes learned the first year. (These elements will be reviewed, so it's okay if any are a bit hazy.)

*Note: Due to maintenance costs, cleaning requirements, and financial constraints, we are unable to provide band instruments or accessories for students to borrow at this time. We are also not able to offer a beginning class for these instruments at this time.

Chorus: For any students who want to sing. Any or no experience is welcome. Any students playing an instrument are also welcome to join chorus as a 2nd music class with parent permission.

NEW! Beginning Piano: For students with absolutely no experience playing piano. It is preferred that students already own a piano or keyboard (any size) or can purchase one, but even students without a physical instrument can learn and participate using a free virtual piano online (e.g. <https://www.onlinepianist.com/virtual-piano>). Of course doing so will necessitate more screen time, so a physical keyboard is highly recommended and preferred. Unfortunately, I am not offering a class to students with previous piano experience at this time.



What to Expect

How will classes be taught?

Music classes will be taught asynchronously, meaning that students will NOT be required to log in to Zoom meetings at specific times for music class, but rather, they would access the learning materials via Google Classroom at a time that is most convenient for them and their families. Thus, students will not miss any of their regular class time if they participate in music this year, but they will be a bit more independent in their music learning, which may present additional challenges for some students.

Lessons will come in the form of one short video (<5 minutes) each week that focuses on one or two concepts. Students will be required to watch the video with a pencil and notebook in hand. They will be guided in taking handwritten notes on the video. (I will literally write down in the video what they should write down in their notebook, which will include some sketching and drawing...so paper and pencil are required!) After watching the video, the student will then use their own handwritten notes to guide their practice for the week.

Later in the year, I may invite students to join in “virtual performances” if they would like to participate. Students would record themselves and submit their videos to me. These virtual performances would require parent permission and are completely optional.

How often should students practice?

I recommend practicing immediately after watching the video for however long it takes to understand the concept in the video (probably at least 10 minutes, but a timer isn't necessary). Students should then practice the skill at least 3 other days that week for at least 10 minutes. Even if they feel they understand it right away, they still need to practice regularly and frequently in order to develop muscle memory. Students can rewatch the video as much as they need to in order to understand the concept, but they should also practice without it, using their notes as a guide, if needed.

*Note: Students who sign up for chorus may find it easier to sing along with recorded music, which may necessitate more screen time than students learning an instrument. One option would be to download the recorded music as an mp3 if you want to avoid the added screen time or have them point the screen away while they practice.



Required Materials

ALL music classes: Pencil and Notebook (you can even make a notebook by stapling or tying scrap paper together, where only one side has been used. No purchasing required and it saves trees!)

Guitar: Guitar, case, set of replacement strings (recommended if you have your own guitar; if you are borrowing, I can replace any broken strings), guitar pick (optional)

*if borrowing, email Mrs. Kaufman if you need a string replaced; picks will not be included

Violin: Violin, bow, case, shoulder rest (\$10-15), rosin (often included when renting but check, about \$5), cleaning rag (can be piece of old, CLEAN shirt)

*if borrowing, all violin supplies will be included

Clarinet: Clarinet, case, extra size 2 clarinet reeds (a box costs about \$20), cleaning swab (about \$7-15, depending on the quality), cork grease (about \$5-7, Vandoren is a trusted brand)

Flute: Flute, case, cleaning rod (about \$10), cleaning rag (about \$5-10, or use a piece of old, CLEAN shirt)

Trumpet: Trumpet, case, valve oil (about \$5-10)

Chorus: your voice, water (have a glass or bottle nearby if you need it)

Piano: piano (many people are giving away their upright pianos if you are prepared to pay for a mover; email Mrs. Kaufman if you are looking for one) or electric piano keyboard (\$30-\$\$\$ depending on quality) or online piano (free, e.g. <https://www.onlinepianist.com/virtual-piano>, <https://recursivearts.com/virtual-piano/>, or <https://www.musicca.com/piano.>) However, a physical instrument is highly recommended if possible.



Instruments: Own, Borrow, Repairs

Own

If you already own the instrument that your child would like to learn, you will want to make sure it's in good working order, has all the proper strings, parts, accessories, etc. (See the previous "Required Materials" page for details on accessories.) You will also want to make sure that the instrument fits your child comfortably. Some guitar sizes may be too big for a child to play comfortably, and it is crucial that violins fit a child's arm length correctly. Check the included "Guitar and Violin Sizing Guides" if you are unsure, or send Mrs. Kaufman an email with any questions.

Borrow

The Mark West District, in partnership with the Luther Burbank Center's Music for Schools Lending Library, offers a limited number of guitars and violins to borrow free-of-charge. Unfortunately, we are unable to loan band instruments (clarinet, flute, or trumpet) or provide band supplies (reeds, valve oil, etc.) at this time.

Due to the limited number of instruments available to lend, these instruments are reserved for families with financial need who could not otherwise afford to participate. If you need to borrow a stringed instrument this year, please be sure to complete the second section of the Registration Form. Otherwise, when you receive notice of the music class in which your child will be participating, you may proceed to find an instrument to rent or to purchase. (See next page for more info on renting or purchasing.)

All instruments have been quarantining for the past 2 months or more. At least five days before they go out, Mrs. Kaufman will tune all violins and guitars with clean hands while wearing a mask to prevent possible contamination. These instruments cannot be washed, but the above precautions should prevent any spread of disease. Students can also wash hands before and after playing, which is a good habit anyway.

Repairing a Damaged Instrument

Please DO NOT attempt to repair instruments yourself, especially if they are borrowed or rented. Often, home repair attempts can cause more damage to an instrument and be much more expensive in the long run. All of the abovementioned music stores have reputable repair shops. Email Mrs. Kaufman as soon as possible if a borrowed instrument needs repairs.



MARK WEST EDUCATION FOUNDATION *For the Arts*

Instruments: Rent or Purchase

Violin, Viola, and Cello

Loveland Violin Shop

618 4th Street, Suite 207, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

707-526-9777 - Now by appointment only; call ahead

Open Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 11-3;

\$22 per month for violin rental

\$35-\$45 per month for cello rental

*You must bring your child with you to be sized for a violin or cello. If renting a violin, purchase a shoulder rest when you go to rent the violin.

Clarinet, Flute, and Trumpet

Santa Rosa Music Center

860 Piner Road, Suite 28, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

707-566-0477

Open Mon-Sat 9-6; Sunday 11-4

\$33.50 per month for most instruments

*Both of these local music stores also **sell** guitars, strings, and other instrument accessories.

Stanroy Music Center

850 4th Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

707-545-4827

Mon-Thurs 10-7; Fri-Sat 10-6

\$20-\$40 per month

Purchasing an Instrument

I do not recommend purchasing a violin, viola, cello, or band instrument unless your child has played for several years and is certain that he/she would like to continue. These instruments are generally expensive to purchase, and an inexpensive instrument often indicates poor quality. Always purchase these types of instruments from a reputable music store. Many music stores will apply a portion of your rental payments toward the purchase of an instrument or offer discounts to school music students.

Decent quality acoustic **GUITARS** can be purchased for about \$75-120. Most music stores will not rent guitars--only sell them. Most students do well with a 3/4 size guitar with nylon strings. Nylon is easier on the fingers. Avoid toy instruments (e.g. First Act).

*Above pricing is approximate. Please contact the stores directly to get current prices and information.



Guitar Sizing Guide

Average Age	Height of Player	Size of Guitar
2-5 years old	3'3" to 3'9"	1/4-Size
5-8 years old	3'10" to 4'5"	1/2-Size
8-12 years old	4'6" to 4'11"	3/4-Size
12-Adult	5' or taller	4/4-Size

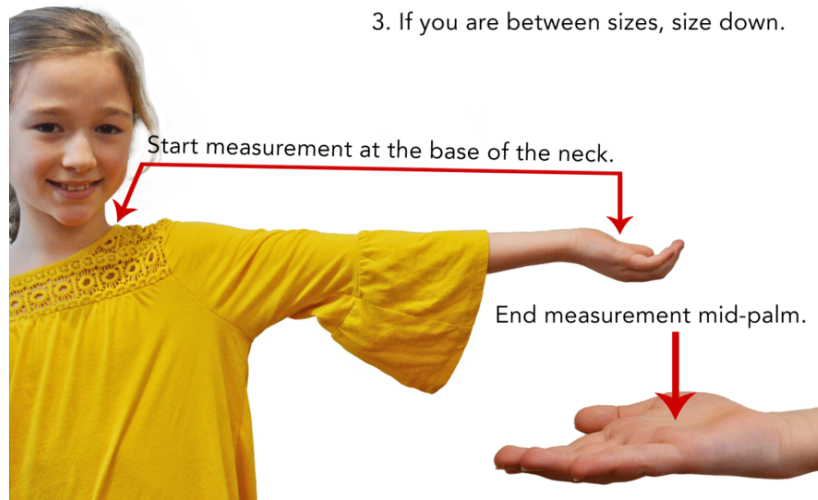
Note: This chart is a guide and does not take into account factors such as arm length, hand span, and finger length. *From <http://www.shepherdguitar.com/the-guitar/>

↓↓↓ Measure the LEFT arm for violin ↓↓↓

SIZING YOUR VIOLIN

For the most accurate size:

1. Extend the arm fully and perpendicular to the body.
2. Measure from the base of the neck to the middle of the palm.
3. If you are between sizes, size down.



Size Chart:

Size	1/6	1/10	1/8	1/4	1/2	3/4	4/4
Age	3-5	3-5	3-5	4-7	6-10	9-11	12+
Arm Length (Inches)	14 -15	15 -16	16 -18	18 -20	20 - 22	22 - 23	23+



MARK WEST EDUCATION FOUNDATION *For the Arts*

Funding the Music Program

The Mark West Education Foundation was established by parents, teachers and administrators to provide funding for music and art programs for the students of the Mark West Union School District. Like many nonprofits at this time, the MWEF is struggling to generate income to continue to fund our arts programs. Our annual Polenta Feed fundraiser has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are unsure when we will be able to reschedule it or if it will successfully generate enough funds once we are able to hold it.

We understand that many families in our district may also be struggling financially at this time due to reduced income, uncertain employment, increased child care costs, or other reasons.

We usually request a \$125 donation from participating music students' families to help the music program continue, but we would like to make it especially clear that this is a voluntary donation. If your family is able to make a donation to support the music program at this time, any amount that works within your budget will be gratefully welcomed. However, if your family is experiencing any hardships that would make donating any amount unfeasible, please know that you may still sign up your child to participate in the program without donating. All are welcome, always.

If you are able to make a donation at this time, there will be a link on the Registration Form that will allow you to donate through PayPal. Or you can mail a check to Mark West Education Foundation, 305 Mark West Springs Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95403 or leave it in your school's mailbox. Please make sure checks are made out to MWEF, and include your child's name and school with the check.

MWEF Board Meetings and Social Media

We meet the 1st Monday of every month (with the exception of holidays) at 6:00 pm via Zoom. For more information or to join a meeting, email us at mwef@mwusd.org

Visit our website at www.mwef.org and "Like" our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MarkWestEducationFoundation>

Do you shop on Amazon.com?

Go to smile.amazon.com, and search for Mark West District Educational Foundation. They will donate to our cause with each purchase using AmazonSmile!



MARK WEST EDUCATION FOUNDATION *For the Arts*

Signing Up

Step 1: Read this entire information packet. Congratulations, you've completed Step 1!

Step 2: By **Friday, August 28**, fill out and submit the 2020-21 Virtual Music Registration Form available on www.mwef.org or through your child's teacher. This is a Google Form. If you have any difficulties accessing the form, please contact Mrs. Kaufman at kkaufman@mwusd.org.

Step 3: Parents, check your email the week of August 31-September 4 to find out which music class your child will be enrolled in. If you plan to rent or buy an instrument, feel free to do so once you receive this information. Students, check your mwusd.org email the week of September 7-11 for the invitation to join your virtual music Google Classroom. Classes will officially begin on September 14!

Step 4 (Optional): If you need to borrow a stringed instrument, please indicate this on your registration form AND make sure you fill out the second section on Borrowing Instruments. Measure your child's left arm for violin, height for guitar, and use the Sizing Guide to determine the proper size instrument. (For more help with measuring for violin, see the last minute of the Music Program Intro Video.) Mrs. Kaufman will contact families about picking up loan instruments during the week of September 7-11.

Thank you for your interest in joining a Virtual Music Class! I look forward to creating music with the students virtually this year!

Mrs. Kaufman

kkaufman@mwusd.org

